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X FOREIGN POULTRY AND EGG REPORTS 1/ March 1, 1946

CANADA'S POULTRY AND EGG INDUSTRY 2/

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Summary

Production of all poultry in Canada was greatly expanded during the war years as a result of increased demand in Canada and abroad. Abundant feed supplies at favorable prices during the early war years were also a factor in the expansion of egg and poultry production. Egg production on farms in Canada in 1945 is preliminarily estimated at 371 million dozen, which is 29 percent above the average for the period 1940-1944, and 69 percent above the average production in the years 1935-1939. Production of poultry meat in 1945 is estimated at 311 million pounds, which is 4 million pounds below the peak production in 1944 but still well above the average of 255 million pounds for the preceding 5 years. Production in the 5 years 1935-1939 averaged 198 million pounds.

The egg industry has become very dependent upon export outlets, with approximately one-fourth of the total production sent abroad, largely to the United Kingdom. From 85 to 90 million dozen are being shipped to this market annually. Until the end of the war, the United States had furnished a ready market for Canadian poultry supplies in excess of domestic requirements.

The expansion of egg production in Canada, together with the wartime declines in European countries, places Canadian production second only to that in the United States. Prior to the war Canada ranked seventh, exclusive of the Soviet Union and China. Even so, the Canadian output in 1945 was only 8.6 percent of the production in the United States.

1/ This series of reports is prepared in the Livestock and Wool Division from material requested from Foreign Service Officers.

2/ Based largely upon information supplied by William Belton, Assistant Agricultural Attache, Ottawa, Canada.



Improved production methods have been a factor in the increased production, as well as the increase in the number of laying hens. For Canada as a whole the production per laying hen increased from 109 eggs per year in 1935 to 116 in 1944. A proportionately larger increase in rate of lay per hen occurred in western Canada than in eastern Canada. Approximately 72 percent of the total chick production is now of approved chicks.

Consumption of eggs by civilians in Canada reached 313 eggs per person in 1945. This compares to 292 eggs in 1944 and is about 27 percent above the 1935-39 average consumption.

Egg prices <sup>3/</sup> have been maintained at favorable levels during the war by purchases for export by the Special Products Board. Wholesale prices for Grade A Large at Montreal have been 31.8 cents or above for the past 3 years. This is equivalent to 33.6 cents packed for export. Between September 15 and November 15 the Board offered 40.9 cents a dozen, basis Montreal, for Grade A Large eggs, which is 6.4 cents higher than its normal spring price.

### Production

Canada expanded its production of eggs and poultry during the war to a degree which permitted these items to occupy a relatively more important place in the country's agriculture than they had before the war, even though production of other commodities was increasing in spectacular fashion. Cash income from the sale of poultry and poultry products rose continuously from \$36.9 million in 1939 to \$118.5 million in 1944. Income from poultry and poultry products amounted to 5.7 percent of total cash income from the sale of farm products in 1939, but by 1942 it accounted for 8.9 percent. By 1944 the figure dropped to 7.4 percent, because of the sharp increase in income from the sale of grain and livestock in western Canada after 1942.

The number of hens and chickens on farms in Canada increased in the 9 years from June 1, 1935, to June 1, 1944, from 53 million to almost 87 million. All but 5 million of this increase occurred during the war years. A decline of 2 million hens and chickens occurred in the year ended June 1, 1945. This was entirely accounted for by decreases in western Canada. In that region returns from the cash sale of grain have been sufficiently profitable and difficulties from farm labor shortages and income taxes sufficiently great so that the even better returns available from feeding the grain they grow have failed to induce farmers to continued their expanded poultry and livestock programs.

Consequently, as is the case with hog production, there is some reason to believe that this downward trend may continue. On the

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<sup>3/</sup> All through this report, wherever prices and cash income are mentioned, they are given in United States currency converted from Canadian currency.

other hand, officials of the Dominion Department of Agriculture, assisted by British Ministry of Food officials, have been conducting a vigorous campaign in western Canada during the past several months for the purpose of creating enthusiasm among poultry producers, and it is the opinion of at least one of them that poultry numbers in that area next year will again show an upswing.

Table 1 indicates the total number of chickens in eastern and western Canada and the percentage of the total which these constitute. It will be observed that birds in western Canada increased from 41 percent of the Dominion total in 1935 to slightly more than 50 percent on June 1, 1944, but that during the next year this proportion declined again.

Table 1 - CANADA: Chicken numbers on farms on June 1 in eastern and western Canada, 1935-1945

Year	Number			Percentage of total	
	West	East	All Canada	West	East
	:Thousands	:Thousands	:Thousands	Percent	
1935	21,501	31,562	53,063	41	59
1936	23,132	32,585	55,717	42	58
1937	21,979	32,004	53,983	41	59
1938	22,036	31,739	53,775	41	59
1939	25,681	32,829	58,510	44	56
1940	26,760	33,441	60,201	44	56
1941	26,062	32,802	58,864	44	56
1942	31,965	36,141	68,106	47	53
1943	35,689	39,272	74,961	48	52
1944	43,412	43,380	86,792	50	50
1945	40,827	43,898	84,725	48	52

Dominion Bureau of Statistics, Livestock Surveys.

During the past few years, laying hens have accounted for approximately 43 percent of all chickens on farms on June 1. During the past 10 years, however, the percentage that laying hens have constituted of all hens and chickens in western Canada has been considerably higher than in eastern Canada. Whereas in the west, laying hens have accounted for from 44 to 49 percent of total flocks, in the east this percentage has varied from 39 to 42 percent.

Not until 1944 did the percentage of laying hens to all hens and chickens become approximately the same on both sides of the country. The difference that existed is probably accounted for by the fact that poultry production methods in the Prairie Provinces have generally been less advanced than in other parts of the country, with the result that old hens were kept in flocks for a longer period of time. With the intensive educational program that has been conducted in recent years, and with the increased returns from poultry which have stimulated interest on the part of Prairie farmers, these practices have now been altered.



Scattered information on egg production costs in the Prairie Provinces indicates a range, excluding labor, of from 12.7 to 28.2 cents per dozen. In 1943, the Dominion Experimental Farm at Brandon estimated the cost of producing eggs on 17 cooperating farms in Manitoba. These flocks averaged less than 100 hens per flock. The average production was 146 eggs per hen. The total cost per dozen eggs produced on these farms was 22.2 cents. When labor costs were omitted, the cost was reduced to 12.7 cents per dozen. Items affecting egg costs were: Average mortality rate; cost of rearing pullets to laying age; capital expenses, i.e., buildings and equipment, feed, and labor.

In Saskatchewan a recent survey of egg costs (excluding labor) made by the poultry department of the University showed costs per dozen of 12.5 cents, with a production per bird of 216 eggs; 15.1 cents at 180 eggs; 18.5 cents at 144 eggs; 22.6 cents at 120 eggs; and 28.3 cents at 96 eggs.

The Commercial Feeders Cooperative, Limited, of Alberta recently gave feed costs per dozen of 18.6 cents with a production of 86 eggs per hen where grain only was fed; 14.5 cents with a production of 133 eggs where grain and concentrates were fed; and 13.9 cents on commercial poultry farms with a rate of lay of 161 eggs per hen.

As production methods have improved, the average number of eggs produced in a year by each laying hen has increased. For Canada as a whole, this figure went up from 109 eggs a year in 1935 to 116 in 1944. The most notable change was again in western Canada, where in the same 10-year period an increase from 103 to 113 eggs per year was achieved.

Table 2 - CANADA: Production and utilization of farm eggs, 1934-1944

Year	: Laying : hens	: Produc- : tion : per : hen	: Total : egg : produc- : tion 1/	: Sold : off : farms	: Farm- : home : consumed
	: Thousands	: Number	: Thousands	: Thousands	: Thousands
1934	: 24,688	: 108	: 2,679,264	: 1,687,932	: 910,944
1935	: 24,594	: 109	: 2,682,480	: 1,689,960	: 912,048
1936	: 23,798	: 111	: 2,633,928	: 1,659,372	: 895,536
1937	: 23,861	: 110	: 2,633,316	: 1,658,988	: 895,332
1938	: 23,089	: 111	: 2,560,788	: 1,621,392	: 852,408
1939	: 24,024	: 111	: 2,660,844	: 1,678,032	: 891,672
1940	: 25,420	: 111	: 2,823,864	: 1,648,320	: 1,077,936
1941	: 25,874	: 113	: 2,929,884	: 1,852,188	: 980,712
1942	: 29,236	: 115	: 3,363,036	: 2,343,348	: 906,576
1943	: 32,725	: 116	: 3,780,324	: 2,635,020	: 1,014,300
1944	: 37,245	: 116	: 4,331,376	: 2,986,152	: 1,193,640
	:	:	:	:	:

The Canadian Year-Book, 1943-44.

1/ Includes eggs sold off farms, farm-home consumed, and used for hatching purposes on farms.

Egg production for the country as a whole rose from a low point of 2,561 million eggs in 1938 to 4,331 million eggs in 1944, as indicated in table 2. With its greater efficiency of production, eastern Canada has kept its lead over western Canada in total egg production, although this lead has been gradually reduced in recent years until in 1944 western Canada produced 48.9 percent of all eggs in the Dominion.

The total production of poultry meat in Canada increased during the war from 212 million pounds in 1939 to 315 million pounds in 1944. Of these amounts, 170 million pounds and 225 million pounds, respectively, were hens and chickens. Turkeys accounted for most of the remainder. Not until 1944 was production sufficient to provide any appreciable surplus for export, but during the past two years a substantial volume of poultry meat has been shipped out of the country, mostly to the United States. The total kill of poultry for 1939 to 1944, inclusive, is given in table 3.

Table 3 - CANADA: Poultry meat produced and marketed, 1939-1944

Year	Total poultry			Hens and chickens		
	Total kill	Marketed off farms	Farm- home con- sumed	Total kill	Marketed off farms	Farm- home con- sumed
	1,000 pounds	1,000 pounds	1,000 pounds	1,000 pounds	1,000 pounds	1,000 pounds
1939	211,988	175,539	36,449	170,415	138,189	32,226
1940	219,119	181,436	37,683	176,137	142,832	33,305
1941	220,007	181,959	38,048	176,594	142,972	33,622
1942	258,650	203,164	55,486	204,318	155,554	48,764
1943	265,308	207,524	57,784	225,802	172,022	53,780
1944	315,176	245,848	69,328	272,340	207,548	64,792

Dominion Bureau of Statistics, Quarterly Bulletins of Agricultural Statistics.

### Goals

Canadian officials have made a slight downward revision since early December in 1946 goals for egg and poultry production. The revised goal for egg production is set at 358,605,000 dozen for 1946. This figure is 97 percent of 1945 production, now preliminarily estimated at 370,659,000 dozen. This estimate indicates that the 1945 egg-production goal established by the Dominion-Provincial Conference in December 1944 at 377,000,000 dozen, exclusive of 20,000,000 dozen from urban flocks, was nearly achieved.



The 1945 poultry production is estimated at 311 million pounds. A production of 288 million pounds is recommended for 1946. Production at this level is about 9 percent less than the peak figure of 315 million pounds in 1944. With reintroduction of meat rationing, domestic use of poultry in Canada has been unusually heavy, and the anticipated 20 to 25 million pounds has not been available for export. If red meat available to consumers continues to be limited in 1946, a continued high level of domestic demand for poultry is anticipated.

### Hatching

There are approximately 600 hatcheries in Canada having a capacity of 1,000 eggs or more. These produced 60.5 million chicks during the 1945 hatching season, a reduction of 14 percent from the record year of 1944 when 70.5 million chicks were produced. Approximately 72 percent of the total chick production is of approved chicks, while the remainder are nonapproved. Production of approved chicks, which are the only type for which estimates are available for a long period of time, was 394 percent greater in 1944 than in 1937. No conclusive information on the proportion of total hatchings which occur on farms is available, and opinions held by various officials are contradictory. There does seem to be agreement that commercial hatchery production is becoming relatively more important each year. The record of chick production in hatcheries from 1937 to 1945 is given in table 4:

Table 4-CANADA: Chick production in hatcheries, 1937-1945

Year	Approved chicks	Estimated non-approved	Total
	Number	Number	Number
1937	12,894,030	a/	-
1938	13,291,483	a/	-
1939	17,208,323	a/	-
1940	18,678,749	a/	-
1941	22,862,548	a/	-
1942	31,197,208	12,379,263	43,576,471
1943	42,841,225	15,999,610	58,840,835
1944	50,864,756	19,649,106	70,513,862
1945	43,436,344	17,100,335	60,536,679

By letter from Dominion Department of Agriculture. a/ not available.

### Marketings

According to Dominion Bureau of Statistics figures, almost 249 million dozen eggs were marketed in Canada in 1944. This was 68.9 percent of total production. More than 99 million, equivalent to 27.6 percent of total production, were consumed on farms, while the remaining 3.5 percent were used for hatching. Marketings accounted for 10 percent more of total egg production in 1944 than they did in 1940, as indicated in table 2. This is, of course, due to the fact that egg production has increased at a much more rapid rate than farm consumption of eggs.



Judging from the experience of the Special Products Board in purchasing eggs for export during the past 4 years, the seasonal pattern of egg marketings in Canada is as follows. The end of October is the lowest point. From that date they gradually increase and about December 15 a surplus over domestic demand becomes available. The period of maximum deliveries occurs during the 2 months March 15 to May 15, with the second to fourth week in April marking the peak. A gradual tapering off then sets in, reaching the beginning of the lowest period about September 15.

In 1941 and 1942, no surplus over domestic requirements was available much after the first week of July. With continuing increases in production, however, the date when the export surplus ceases to be available has become gradually later in the summer. During 1945, as a result of a special price offered for fall eggs, the Special Products Board made purchases as late as October 19.

#### Consumption

Consumption of eggs by civilians in Canada amounted to 36.4 pounds (equivalent to 24.3 dozens) per person in 1944. This figure compared with 35.3 pounds in 1943, 32.1 pounds in 1942, and a 1935-1939 average of 30.7 pounds.

Consumption of hens and chickens has also increased appreciably, amounting to an average per person of 23.7 pounds in 1944 compared with 20.5 pounds in 1943, 19.3 in 1942, and 15.6 pounds for the average of the 5 years 1935-1939.

A survey of meat consumption in city households, conducted by Dominion Department of Agriculture officials in 1936, shows the following habits of poultry consumption in domestic households.

The annual per capita consumption of poultry of all kinds in the households interviewed in St. John was 11.9 pounds, in Montreal 10.4 pounds, and in Vancouver 7.3 pounds. There was a close relationship between poultry consumption and the income of the household. Persons in relief families in St. John consumed only 0.9 of a pound, in Vancouver only 0.6 of a pound, and in Montreal 1.3 pounds annually. Consumption per person rose steadily with rising incomes until in the highest income group of families it was 31.2 pounds in St. John, 24.3 pounds in Montreal, and 20.1 pounds in Vancouver. Nearly 86 percent of the households visited in St. John, 70 percent in Vancouver, but only 59 percent in Montreal used poultry of some kind during the year.

#### Stocks

Stocks of storage eggs in Canada this fall reached the highest October 1 figure in at least the past 9 years, at more than 11 million dozen. Frozen eggs, at over 27 million pounds, were at a very high level, but considerably below the 1944 figure of over 44 million pounds.

Total egg stocks on October 1 were equivalent to 1,202,000 cases, but the seasonal decline in storage stocks from the customary summer peak had begun. As a result of the large production of eggs, stocks this year have been surpassed previously only by those of 1944.

Table 5 indicates the effect of Canada's egg-drying program on stocks. Frozen eggs have assumed unusual importance in comparison with storage eggs in recent years. This was particularly true in 1943, when drying requirements demanded frozen eggs to such an extent that storage stocks remained close to exhaustion, even during the customary peak months.

Table 5 - CANADA: Egg stocks, bimonthly, 1937-1945

Year and product	On first day of					
	February	April	June	August	October	December
<u>Storage eggs</u>	<u>1,000 dozen</u>	<u>1,000 dozen</u>	<u>1,000 dozen</u>	<u>1,000 dozen</u>	<u>1,000 dozen</u>	<u>1,000 dozen</u>
1937	934	460	8,349	10,741	9,367	2,961
1938	617	484	7,132	8,679	7,799	2,529
1939	531	96	5,825	8,110	7,191	1,606
1940	780	666	7,061	8,811	7,428	719
1941	227	1,106	6,141	10,659	7,355	960
1942	148	3,633	15,544	14,159	6,832	438
1943	1,513	1,013	3,279	1,018	411	82
1944	1,178	3,174	12,679	14,308	7,532	538
1945	404	1,096	13,378	17,075	11,456	1
<u>Frozen eggs</u>	<u>1,000 pounds</u>	<u>1,000 pounds</u>	<u>1,000 pounds</u>	<u>1,000 pounds</u>	<u>1,000 pounds</u>	<u>1,000 pounds</u>
1937	3,113	2,449	4,176	5,969	5,106	4,017
1938	3,060	2,240	3,503	4,989	4,506	3,492
1939	2,653	2,090	4,377	6,411	5,369	4,287
1940	3,284	2,997	5,506	7,450	6,610	5,103
1941	3,900	3,837	5,936	6,750	6,633	5,077
1942	3,683	2,745	7,768	16,012	16,599	11,168
1943	2,848	3,232	11,718	18,214	16,744	9,595
1944	5,684	13,318	29,778	42,590	44,429	37,840
1945	24,338	11,898	18,097	29,860	a/27,305	a/14,288

Source: Dominion Bureau of Statistics, Stocks of Dairy Products

a/ Preliminary.



Stocks of dressed poultry in Canada are at only moderately high levels in spite of heavy production and the cancellation of export contracts with the end of the war. This can be attributed primarily to the heavy domestic demand resulting from the recent rationing of other types of meat. A somewhat analogous situation developed during meat rationing in 1943. Stocks of dressed poultry in Canada on January 1, 1946, are preliminarily estimated at 16 million pounds, compared to 24.4 million pounds a year earlier.

Table 6-CANADA: Poultry stocks, bimonthly, 1939-1945

[illegible]

Dominion Bureau of Statistics, Stocks of Dairy and Poultry Products.

a/ Includes broilers, chickens, fowl, ducks, geese, turkeys, and unclassified,

## Exports and Imports

The Canadian egg situation has been dominated during the past several years by large export contracts with Great Britain. The British started buying large volumes of eggs from Canada in 1940, and since 1941 these purchases have been made by the British Ministry of Food through the



Special Products Board, an agency of the Canadian Department of Agriculture. Early contracts called for fixed quantities of eggs and were negotiated on a shell-egg basis. In February 1942 the British requested that the remainder of the 1942 contract be furnished in the form of dried eggs, and a conversion charge for turning shell eggs into powder was added to the contract price. The 1943 and 1944 contracts differed from earlier ones in calling for eggs in dried form. Since the beginning of 1945 shell eggs have again become important. In spite of this return to shell-egg shipments, the volume of dried eggs shipped has also increased.

Dried-egg production in Canada has become of real importance as a result of these export contracts. There are now ten drying plants in operation, in addition to a few milk-drying plants that process eggs in the off-season. Three plants are now engaged in producing sugar-dried eggs. The sugar is provided out of the British sugar allotment.

In the process of fulfilling its 1945 contract to supply shell and dried eggs to Great Britain, the Special Products Board purchased 2,998,170 cases of eggs, having a capacity of 30 dozen each. The record of these purchases since their inception in 1941 is as follows:

CANADA: Special Products Board egg purchases  
(cases of 30 dozen)

1941	511,220
1942	1,251,198
1943	1,121,427
1944	2,664,325
1945	2,998,170

Exports of shell and dried eggs from Canada reached the record total of more than 42 million dozen shell eggs and almost 25 million pounds of dried egg powder during 1945. Both these quantities far exceed anything previously achieved. Exports of dried eggs must be discounted somewhat to allow for the fact that about one-third of the dried eggs now being exported consist of about one-third sugar.

Some shell-egg shipments to Great Britain were made from Pacific ports in 1945. One 95,000-case shipment left Vancouver on October 31.

It will be noted in table 7 that exports of shell eggs to the United States increased remarkably the past year. Dominion Department of Agriculture officials state that this is due to a sudden interest in Canadian hatching eggs in the United States. They are hopeful that it may indicate the beginning of a profitable export business, and believe that natural conditions which make northern climes more suitable for the hatching of wild birds are also operative with regard to domestic poultry. This, in their eyes, makes Canada a natural source of hatching eggs for the United States.

Table 7-CANADA: Egg exports, 1932-1945

Year	:Shell eggs				Dried eggs		
	Total	To U.K.	To U.S.	Other	Total	To U.K.	Other
	: 1,000	: 1,000	: 1,000	: 1,000	: 1,000	: 1,000	: 1,000
	: dozen	: dozen	: dozen	: dozen	: pounds	: pounds	: pounds
1932	: 273	: 25	: 7	: 241	: -	: -	: -
1933	: 1,988	: 1,750	: 4	: 234	: -	: -	: -
1934	: 2,001	: 1,838	: a/	: 163	: -	: -	: -
1935	: 1,301	: 997	: 66	: 238	: -	: -	: -
1936	: 1,204	: 993	: 3	: 208	: -	: -	: -
1937	: 1,602	: 1,346	: 2	: 254	: -	: -	: -
1938	: 1,843	: 1,540	: 1	: 302	: -	: -	: -
1939	: 1,274	: 1,024	: -	: 250	: -	: -	: -
1940	: 10,980	: 10,619	: -	: 361	: -	: -	: -
1941	: 16,276	: 15,257	: -	: 1,019	: -	: -	: -
1942	: 6,054	: 4,375	: -	: 1,679	: 7,744	: 7,662	: 82
1943	: 1,279	: -	: 81	: 1,198	: 13,594	: 13,449	: 145
1944	: 1,440	: -	: -	: 1,440	: 18,988	: 18,952	: 36
1945	: 42,243	: 40,266	: b/ 629	: 1,348	: 24,850	: 24,493	: 357

Dominion Bureau of Statistics, Trade of Canada.

a/ Less than 500 dozen.

b/ Does not include 141,153 dozen shipped to Alaska.

An agreement for the purchase of Canadian eggs by the British Ministry of Food through 1946 has already been signed. The contract calls for the delivery of 1,750,000 cases of shell eggs and 5,000 long tons of dried whole eggs during 1946. An equivalent quantity of sugar-dried eggs may be substituted for dried whole eggs at the request of the Ministry of Food. Shell eggs are to be supplied as follows: 900,000 cases of fresh eggs for winter and spring shipment, 250,000 cases of fresh eggs for autumn shipment, and 600,000 cases of storage eggs for autumn shipment. It has been the practice not to attempt shipments of shell eggs during the summer months. Fresh-egg shipments in 1946, as was the case in 1945, are to consist only of Grade A Large and Grade A Mediums, and only those types will be stored. Storage eggs are not to be shipped if after regrading they are lower than Grade B. Dried eggs are supplied in 5-ounce and 14-pound cartons.

Canadian egg imports are of only minor importance. Since 1932, shell-egg imports have only once reached an annual total in excess of 57,000 dozen, while dried-egg imports have not exceeded a yearly figure of 160,000 pounds. Almost all of these imports have originated in the United States.



Exports of poultry meat have become of importance to Canada only since 1944, when more than 16 million pounds were exported, the greater bulk of which went to the United States as a result of army purchases. The United States Army also contracted for up to 30 million pounds of Canadian poultry meat this year, but canceled these orders shortly after V-J Day. During the first 9 months of 1945, something more than 10 million pounds of poultry had been exported to the United States.

With red meat being rationed in Canada, poultry consumption is heavy, and it is probable that there will be no particular difficulty in finding a domestic market for most poultry meat. Exports of poultry are subject to permit. Permits are not now being granted, pending the time when a backlog of 18 million pounds of dressed poultry has been stored for domestic requirements.

Table 8 - CANADA: Dressed and undressed poultry exports, 1932-1945

Year	Total	To U.S.	To U.K.	Other
	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
	<u>pounds</u>	<u>pounds</u>	<u>pounds</u>	<u>pounds</u>
1932	1,584	279	1,096	209
1933	1,226	9	927	290
1934	2,477	18	2,165	294
1935	2,744	116	2,326	302
1936	2,968	175	2,335	458
1937	4,572	42	4,038	492
1938	1,894	3	1,473	418
1939	2,788	2	2,315	471
1940	1,386	212	779	395
1941	791	a/	-	791
1942	1,876	834	-	1,042
1943	707	10	58	639
1944	16,117	12,762	2,165	1,190
1945	11,162	10,414	-	748

Dominion Bureau of Statistics, Trade of Canada.

a/ Less than 500 pounds.

Poultry-meat imports are of relatively little importance. Records of quantity are not kept, but only twice since 1932 has the annual value of imports exceeded \$59,085, and the highest annual total was only \$108,635.



Exports of live poultry, which move almost entirely to the United States, have at various times assumed a considerable volume, reaching almost 1.3 million birds in 1937. During the first 9 months of 1945 they amounted to only 32,412 birds, due to export restrictions designed to increase poultry-meat exports, first to the United States Army and later to the British in canned form.

Exports of pure-bred poultry go largely to Newfoundland, and to a small extent to the United States. They have varied from 5,000 to 35,000 birds per year during the past 10 years. Baby-chick exports were not classified separately prior to 1940, but in each year from 1940 through 1944 they were exceeded by small imports coming almost entirely from the United States. Great interest in Canadian hatching eggs in the United States has been paralleled the past year by similar interest in baby chicks, and exports increased tremendously to a total of 762,000 in the first 9 months of 1945, almost all of which went to the United States. Imports at about the normal rate amounted to less than 14,000.

#### Subsidies

Canada's large expansion of egg production and exports has been accomplished with only minor aid from subsidies. Effective March 24, 1941, British Columbia granted a subsidy of 3 cents per dozen on export eggs produced in that Province, up to a maximum of 30,000 cases. Dominion Department of Agriculture officials have little information on this subsidy, but are under the impression that it was not renewed after 1941. Effective December 22, 1941, the Dominion Department of Agriculture granted a subsidy of 3 cents a dozen on export eggs. This continued until the end of 1942, when it was replaced by an increase in the price offered for export eggs, which made the subsidy unnecessary. In 1943 a one-cent-per-pound subsidy on frozen eggs was granted, but it was discontinued effective April 1, 1945, in anticipation that deliveries would be sufficient to meet demands without it. At the time of this change, an increase of 1/2 cent per pound in the ceiling price for frozen eggs was authorized.

Poultry producers are receiving an indirect subsidy through freight assistance on feed grains shipped from the Prairie Provinces and through a subsidy on wheat used for feeding within the Prairies.

#### Prices

Canadian egg prices during recent years have fluctuated between ceilings established by the Wartime Prices and Trade Board and floors provided indirectly through the prices at which eggs may at all times be sold to the Special Products Board. The range of egg prices at Montreal since 1939 is given in table 9.

Table 9 - CANADA: Eggs, wholesale prices per dozen for Grade A Large at Montreal, 1939-1945

Date	: 1939	: 1940	: 1941	: 1942	: 1943	: 1944	: 1945
	: Cents	: Cents	: Cents	: Cents	: Cents	: Cents	: Cents
Jan. 3	: 27.3	: 22.7	: 22.7	: 31.4	: 43.2	: 34.8	: 33.2
Jan. 31	: 20.9	: 20.3	: 21.2	: 30.5	: 33.2	: 33.2	: 32.1
Feb. 28	: 21.8	: 21.8	: 19.5	: 30.3	: 32.7	: 32.3	: 32.1
Mar. 28	: 20.9	: 20.0	: 19.4	: 28.2	: 31.4	: 32.3	: 32.1
Apr. 25	: 20.3	: 22.0	: 20.9	: 26.8	: 32.3	: 32.3	: 32.1
May 23	: 18.9	: 21.4	: 21.8	: 29.1	: 32.2	: 32.1	: 31.8
June 20	: 18.9	: 21.8	: 26.2	: 29.9	: 33.6	: 32.1	: 32.1
July 18	: 22.1	: 22.3	: 31.2	: 30.7	: 39.8	: 33.2	: 34.4
Aug. 15	: -	: -	: -	: 37.3	: 40.9	: 37.7	: 41.6
Sept. 12	: 32.3	: 30.5	: 34.1	: 36.8	: 43.9	: 38.5	: 42.5
Oct. 10	: 33.6	: 34.4	: 37.3	: 44.5	: 45.9	: 33.2	: 45.9
Nov. 7	: 40.9	: 43.6	: 49.1	: 45.5	: 45.9	: 42.7	: 45.9
Dec. 5	: 29.5	: 33.6	: 39.1	: 45.5	: 45.9	: 35.9	: 39.5
	: :	: :	: :	: :	: :	: :	: :

Dominion Department of Agriculture, Egg and Poultry Market Report, Weekly.

Note: Where a range of prices existed, this table shows the average of the range extremes.

The Special Products Board usually offers a price that is maintained, irrespective of seasonal variations in marketings. When prices rise above the level being offered by the Board, purchases for export are not made. The Board offered 40.9 cents a dozen, however, between September 15 and November 30, basis Montreal, for Grade A Large eggs, which was 6.4 cents higher than its normal spring price. This was done in an effort to provide fresh eggs for export last fall.

Wholesale ceiling prices for eggs at selected cities in the Dominion are as follows:

	Cents per dozen				
	A Large	B Medium	A Pullet	B	C
Montreal	45.9	43.9	41.1	41.1	39.3
Toronto	45.5	43.6	40.9	40.9	39.1
Winnipeg	44.1	42.3	39.5	39.5	37.7

In addition to these prices, an additional 1 cent per half dozen may be offered for eggs in cartons, and a 4-cent premium may be granted for A-1 eggs.



Ceiling prices on frozen mixed eggs are 23.6 cents per pound at Toronto and Montreal during March, April, and May, with an addition to this price of 1/4 cent per pound permitted each month from June through February. Appropriate variations from this price are provided for other cities.

Egg prices on the export contract with Great Britain are 37.7 cents per dozen for A Large, basis f.o.b. seaboard, and 35.9 cents per dozen for A Mediums. An allowance of 1 cent per dozen is granted for oil-dipped eggs when they are requested. Grade A whole dried eggs in bulk pack are sold to the British at \$1.11 per pound, and Grade B at \$1.06 per pound. Grade A eggs in the consumer pack sell for \$1.17 per pound.

An important feature of the British export contract provides that any savings effected in the dealings of the Special Products Board under the egg-purchase agreement are to be returned to the British. Egg prices in early contracts negotiated with the British Ministry of Food were much lower than at present. For instance, in the 1941-42 winter contract the price was 14 shillings 6 pence per 10 dozen, equivalent to 32.1175 Canadian cents per dozen, and in the 1942 spring contract the price was only 13 shillings for Grade A, equivalent to 27.795 Canadian cents per dozen. In United States currency, these prices are 29.1948 cents and 25.265 cents, respectively.

Poultry prices have remained at ceilings for the past several months. An elaborate schedule to maximum prices for dressed poultry, box-packed and graded, has been established by the Wartime Prices and Trade Board. For the principal areas of Quebec and Ontario, including Montreal and Toronto, these prices range from 35 cents per pound for Grade A milk-fed chickens during the last four months of the year, and from 28 cents per pound for Grade A hens from July 1 to September 30. Gradual increases in these prices are granted during the succeeding months after the periods mentioned.



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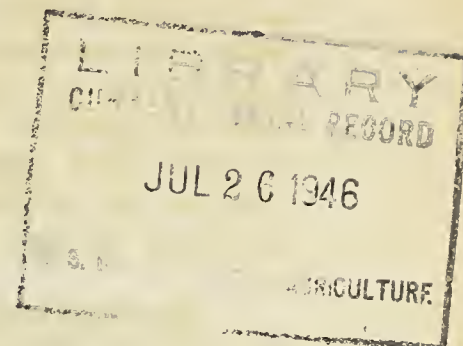
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
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June 3, 1946

X FOREIGN POULTRY AND EGG REPORTS 1/

MEXICO'S POULTRY AND EGG INDUSTRY 2/



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Summary

The poultry industry of Mexico is a farm-household affair, and except on a very few commercial farms, the birds subsist as scavengers. The average farm family has about 25 chickens, which are an important source of meat. This is especially true among the lower classes of people, which include most of the population. Chickens form an important part of the diet and are used as a base in several of Mexico's national dishes.

Egg prices have doubled in the past 2 to 3 years, and eggs have been selling at 60 cents per dozen. The lower classes of the population with limited purchasing power have been forced to reduce their consumption of eggs.

Imports of eggs and of baby chicks are the items of importance in foreign trade. Trade in these items has jumped considerably in the past 2 years, with practically all supplies coming from the United States. Prospects of continuing this trade, which in 1944 amounted to about 500,000 dozens of eggs and 3.7 million baby chicks, are dependent upon the prices in Mexico remaining at present inflated levels.

- 1/ This series of reports is prepared in the Livestock and Wool Division, from material requested from Foreign Service Officers.
- 2/ Based largely upon information supplied by Edward J. May, Junior Agricultural Analyst, Mexico, D.F., Mexico.

JUN 27 1946

## Production

Mexico's poultry industry may rightfully be called a "backyard" industry, as over 90 percent of the poultry of the country are located on general farms. It is roughly estimated that for the Republic as a whole the average number of chickens per farm family is about 25. According to the agricultural census of 1940, the only official information on poultry in Mexico, the total number of chickens in the country at that time approximated 35,275,000, and of turkeys 1,845,000. No statistics are available regarding the number of ducks and geese, other types of fowl, or egg production.

The Central Bureau of Statistics places the distribution of the 35,275,000 chickens as 20,090,000 on farms of 12 acres or less; 2,516,000 on farms of over 12 acres; and 12,667,000 on "ejidos" (communal farms). However, the Bureau of Agrarian Organization has estimates on the composition of flocks on "ejidos" which show hens, 4,205,000; cocks, 1,209,000; and baby chicks, 3,902,000, a total of only 9,316,000.

In the case of turkeys, the Central Bureau of Statistics places the number in the country at 1,845,000, distributed as follows: 1,218,000 on holdings of 12 acres or less; 111,033 on holdings of more than 12 acres; and 515,747 on "ejidos." The Bureau of Agrarian Organization has a slightly higher estimate of 547,000 on "ejidos."

As shown in the above statistics, chickens are the most important fowl in Mexico. In addition to producing eggs, they are perhaps even more important as a source of meat. It is believed that, considering the country as a whole, nearly as much chicken is consumed as either pork or beef, as it is an important ingredient in many of the country's dishes. Turkeys are also important, but less so than chickens. Turkeys are principally used in the preparation of the national holiday dish, "turkey with molé," "molé" being a sauce prepared from 15 or more spices and herbs. Of even less importance are ducks and geese; ducks, in particular, are supplied by hunters who find a supply the year around.

Preference for one breed over another on the basis of egg productivity is not evident. Little or no scientific practice is observed in either hatching or care of chickens, with most of the work being left to nature. With the exception of a few individuals who have small incubators, all eggs are hatched by hens. Trap-nesting chickens in order to keep a record of performance (ROP) is practically nonexistent. This is in itself indicative of the fact that little effort is being made in the improvement of breeds.



### Breeds

The most common breeds in Mexico are the same as in the United States. For the sole purpose of egg production the Leghorn is of course the most popular breed. Occasionally one finds a person who talks of the merits of the sister breed Minorca, but few of these are to be found in Mexico. These are the only two breeds of the Mediterranean class that receive any attention in Mexico. For an all-purpose chicken, the American class is very popular. Of the various breeds of this class the Rhode Island Reds, Plymouth Rocks, barred and white, and White Wyandottes are the most popular. The English class is not too popular, with the Orpington, principally the Buff Orpington, being the most important. For the purpose of novelty, a few persons keep some Cornish, Australorp, and Dorking, but outside of the Orpington the English class has not obtained a position of productive importance in Mexico. Also for the sake of show, a few Brahmas, Cochins, and Langshan of the Asiatic class are found in Mexico. The Brahmas attract the most attention because of their tremendous size.

### Commercial Farms

As previously mentioned, most of Mexico's chickens are on general farms rather than commercial poultry farms. For the Republic as a whole, it is estimated that no more than 5 percent of the eggs are produced on commercial farms. Only in the vicinity of the large cities, which are the principal markets, are commercial farms to be found. In the area of Guadalajara, Mexico's second largest city, there are three commercial poultry farms, the largest having approximately 3,000 poults and the smallest about 500. In the Federal District, in which Mexico City is located, there are about five commercial farms of importance and a number of individuals who operate small farms in an amateurish manner.

The largest poultry farm in Mexico is located in the northern part of the State of Baja California and has about 25,000 chickens. It is believed that most of the production from this establishment is sent to California, principally to San Diego, which is only a few miles north.

With only about 5 percent of Mexico's eggs being produced on commercial farms, the remaining 95 percent come from general farms. For the purpose of gathering eggs for the markets, the general practice is for buyers to go direct to farms and purchase small lots from each farm. In this manner, eggs are collected and taken to central shipping points where they are consigned and shipped to wholesale dealers in cities. These wholesalers in turn sell them to retailers. In this manner eggs on the Mexico City market originate practically all over the Republic, with eggs being sent from such States as Oaxaca, Guanajuato, Michoacán, and Hidalgo. No estimate is available regarding the annual production of eggs in Mexico, but it is known that the average annual production of eggs per hen in Mexico is relatively low, possibly less than 100 eggs.

## Practices

Modern poultry practices have not been generally applied in Mexico. Outside of the few commercial farms in the country, little or no attention is paid to chickens except in killing for eating purposes. Chicks are allowed to run loose and are forced to scratch for feed; no houses or brooders are provided except in isolated cases; hatching of eggs is left to nature rather than the use of incubators; and chickens and turkeys are allowed to run on the same land, which many persons in other countries do not consider advisable. In the few cases where chickens are fed, the feed consists of concentrates with mixtures similar to those used in the United States. There are only rare cases of this, however.

Losses by death are commonly accepted by every chicken raiser in the world as a necessary part of the cost of raising chicks, but through certain practices and precautions these losses may be confined to a minimum. In Mexico, few persons attempt to minimize losses by applying definite practices. Losses are common as a result of chilling, pullorum diseases, rickets, scurvy, diarrhea, etc. Some of these diseases may be traced to vitamin deficiencies, such as rickets and scurvy in the deficiency of vitamin D, diarrhea as a deficiency of riboflavin and vitamin A, etc. Losses as a result of the above could be reduced considerably if recommendations for poultry raising were practiced.

## Prices

Egg prices within the past 2 to 3 years have doubled. Whereas in 1942 and 1943 the retail price of eggs in Mexico City averaged 11 and 14 centavos, respectively, in 1944 the average jumped to 19 centavos. At the present time eggs are selling for 25 centavos each. Converted into United States currency this figures out about 60 cents a dozen. This is probably the highest price for which eggs have sold in Mexico City, at least for a good many years.

## Foreign Trade

Mexico has no surplus of eggs. Therefore, there have been no exports, but imports have been on the increase, together with those of baby chicks.

## Eggs

Since 1942, when only 11,045 pounds of eggs were imported, practically all of which came from the United States, imports have increased substantially. During 1944, imports aggregated 2,197,805 pounds (1,465,211 dozens) and in the first 6 months of 1945 they amounted to 760,014 pounds (506,679 dozens).



Table I  
EGGS: Average wholesale and retail price  
per dozen in Mexico City, 1939-1944  
and January-August 1945

Year	Per dozen	
	Wholesale	Retail
	Cents	Cents
1939	.16	.21
1940	.16	.20
1941	.19	.25
1942	.22	.27
1943	.30	.35
1944	.40	.47
1945		
January	.45	.59
February	.40	.49
March	.39	.44
April	.43	.47
May	.43	.49
June	.47	.52
July	.56	.62
August	.54	.62
5-year average		
1940-1944	.25	.29

Source: Boletín Mensual de la Dirección  
de Economía Rural.

Table II  
CHICKS AND EGGS: Quantity and value of imports into Mexico,  
1940-1944 and first half of 1945

Year	Eggs			Chicks		
	Quantity		Value	Quantity		Value
	Weight	Number		Weight	Number 1/	
	Pounds	Dozens	Dollars	Pounds	Thous.	Dollars
1940	0	0	0	0	0	0
1941	0	0	0	0	0	0
1942	11,045	7,363	1,213	130,581	1,451	8,308
1943	3,898	2,599	756	152,408	1,693	12,988
1944	2,197,805	1,465,211	424,285	337,006	3,744	28,329
1945 2/	760,014	506,679	158,465	352,796	3,920	35,230

1/ Converted at 9 pounds per 100 chicks. 2/ First 6 months.

## Chicks

The only other foreign trade item of any importance is the import of baby chicks. Practically all of these chicks are purchased in the United States and flown to Mexico by air express. Most of the chicks are imported by poultry supply houses and then sold to chicken raisers. Imports reached about 3.7 million baby chicks in 1944 and approached 4 million in the first 6 months of 1945.

## Market Situation

During the past 2 years Mexico has not had a surplus of eggs. The price has advanced from 35 cents per dozen in 1943 to 62 cents in 1945. In spite of this price situation, demand is such that imports have jumped up to one and a half million dozens a year. It is believed that the lower classes of the population with limited purchasing power have been forced to reduce their consumption of eggs.

Because of the current high prices, many persons have found it profitable to import fresh eggs from the United States and sell them locally. One organization which has done this is Nacional Distribuidora y Reguladora, S. A. de C. V., a semigovernmental organization charged with the responsibility of keeping prices of staple commodities at equitable levels. Distribuidora maintains prices by selling through its own stores, which are referred to as "tiendas populares." While Distribuidora has made an honest effort to keep egg prices down, much of its efforts have been in vain. In the case of eggs, a large part of the available supply is purchased at the lower price by retailers, who in turn sell the eggs in their own establishments at current retail prices, thus realizing a nice profit for their limited effort.

It is difficult to predict whether Mexico will increase or decrease its imports of poultry products from the United States. If Mexico's inflation continues unabated, while at the same time egg prices in the United States remain at levels where it is profitable for Mexico to import eggs, then imports into Mexico are likely to increase. On the other hand, if prices in Mexico level off and start downward, then Mexico's imports of poultry and egg products are likely to return to the level of the year 1943, when prices were more or less normal.



# MEXICO

## NUMBER OF TURKEYS BY STATES, 1940

